



From the Office of Secretary of State John A. Gale

www.sos.ne.gov

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Please note that Sec. Gale will be available for interviews about NEReg2Vote on Tuesday, September 22.

NEReg2Vote ready to receive online voter registration applications

LINCOLN – Following a year of design and development involving state agencies and IT vendors, NEReg2Vote went online this morning, to mark National Voter Registration Day. Governor Pete Ricketts issued a proclamation also naming September 22nd Nebraska Online Voter Registration Day.

“This is an exciting and important advance in our statewide election system,” explained Gale. “Now Nebraska residents can submit a new voter registration or update their current registration at anytime, anywhere from their computers or mobile devices.”

Nebraska is the 24TH state to implement an online voter registration system and the fourth in 2015 after Pennsylvania, Hawaii and Massachusetts. Arizona was first in 2002. Gale said he is anticipating an eager interest, and is excited to think that many users will log onto NEReg2Vote during the first week of service.

“Because it is new, we expect an initial surge in usage,” added Gale. “Other states have also indicated both an early surge as well as an overall increase in registration numbers after implementing their online systems. We hope this also translates into greater participation at the polls.”

The web address is: www.ne.gov/go/NEreg2vote. There is also a link on the front page of the Secretary of State’s website at www.sos.ne.gov.

Once there, users are asked to fill out their name, birthdate and driver's license or state-issued identification number, as it appears on their card. That is important, because the system is designed to securely retrieve and match the user's personal information from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Users can update their name, address and party affiliation on their voter registration record. NReg2Vote is also available in Spanish.

"In order to better assist users, we've also included a demonstration program on the website, to walk users through the application process and an FAQ page to help answer some of the most common questions about the system," added Gale.

In order to complete their submission, users must attest to the fact that all of the information is true and accurate. Falsification of information could result in a felony charge, a deterrent against fraud.

"Applications submitted electronically are more secure, faster and more efficient," said Gale. "This reduces postage costs and errors that could result with paper registration forms."

Those can include mistakes resulting from having to interpret someone's handwriting or through data entry. There is also a chance of a registration form being lost in the mail.

Before the electronic application reaches the appropriate county election official, the signature of the applicant is retrieved from the DMV database.

That is another secure feature NReg2Vote. Because it is electronically transmitted, the signature cannot be shared or reproduced in any way. It is only added to the user's application after they have submitted their data. As with all paper voter applications, those transmitted digitally will be reviewed individually by the appropriate county election official.

Gale said that, "if the application contains the required and correct information, it will be approved. If there is a problem, the applicant will be notified as to what additional information needs to be supplied."

In addition to the Secretary of State's office, two other state agencies were also involved: the Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and the DMV as well as three IT vendors: Election Systems and Software (ES&S), MorphoTrust and Nebraska Interactive, Inc. (NI).

Gale thanked Senator Bob Krist of Omaha for championing the legislation that led to the development of NReg2Vote. A second part of that legislation, implemented in 2016 will also allow employees at the DMV to register users electronically. "This

new process will allow the data to be entered directly into the system and transmitted electronically to the county election office – no paper needed.”

Gale said that when the legislature first examined the possibility of initiating an online voter registration system in 2011, the associated costs and technological needs were largely unknown. “Based on research conducted by my office in 2013, the time was right to move ahead with LB 661. Since then, nine states, including Nebraska have added online voter registration.”

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